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AUTHOR Katsinas, Stephen G.
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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing contributions of community college institutes and associations to educational research, most university-based colleges of education still minimize the value of this research and often contain only one professor whose primary interest and/or expertise is community colleges. To address this issue, researchers should make efforts to raise the visibility of community college research within colleges of education by conducting research on essential characteristics and purposes of the colleges. In addition, colleges of education should be educated on the service mission of community college researchers. The key to improving the status of community college research is to place a primary emphasis on service and view teaching and research as vehicles to accomplish that service. Larger community college research programs, those with more than one full-time faculty member engaged in research on the colleges, should provide greater opportunities and avenues of service. Activities might include developing and disseminating a selected bibliography on recently completed doctoral dissertations related to community colleges, collecting and disseminating information related to the teaching of community college education, and developing a better data base of research on the field. Smaller programs can increase service activities through participation in national organizations, such as the Council of Universities and Colleges, to promote service to the field, discuss research, and share ideas regarding best practices. (TGI)

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Service is the Key: Reflections on Community College Education

By
Stephen G. Katsinas
University of Toledo

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the council of Universities and Colleges (Atlanta, GA, April 13, 1996).

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"Service is the Key--Reflections on Community College Education"

Presidential Address to the 38th Annual Conference
of the Council of Universities and Colleges
by Stephen G. Katsinas, Ph.D., The University of Toledo
Atlanta, Georgia
April 13, 1995[1]

Today the Council of Universities and Colleges initiates a new tradition, that of the outgoing President giving a short speech reflecting her or his views regarding a topic of broad concern to our field. It is my hope that you will find the topic of today's remarks challenging and engaging.

My perspective is shaped by involvement that spans rural community colleges in the most economically distressed regions of the United States to staff experience at Miami-Dade Community College, one of the nation's largest multi-campus urban community college districts. It is also shaped by involvement in teaching, research, and service activities related to community colleges at three universities, in Alabama, Oklahoma, and Ohio. I hold an abiding interest in the study of higher education, and a deep concern for the future of our profession, and where community college education fits within that profession. Finally, my perspective is influenced by my involvement with this organization; today marks the 11th consecutive Council of Universities and Colleges meeting attended.

Here is how I see our field evolving:

First, the sheer volume of work in our field, and the quality of it, is greater and better than it has ever been. Much of the work is quite interesting and stimulating. For example, Dick Richardson's work with the California Higher Education Policy Center will provide a critical examination of community college governance. Laura Rendon's recent book, co-edited with Richard Hope, properly places issues related to how minority students use community colleges in the broader perspective of developing a seamless pipeline for students, from secondary to community colleges to baccalaureate degree granting institutions, to "educate a new majority." We see S.V. "Marty" Martorana's analysis of state legislation, initiated in the late 1950s continuing today, and Terry Tollefson's third edition analysis of state community college systems soon to be published. Debra Bragg's work is blazing some badly needed trails regarding vocational transfer and tech-prep. There are many others.

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[1] The author wishes to thank John E. King, Distinguished Visiting Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina for his ideas and suggestions. Responsibility for any of the comments and ideas belong to the author alone.

The continuing work of people new to our field within the past five years is particularly exciting. For example, the institutes developed by Beverly Bower at the University of South Carolina, John Levin at Arizona, Joshua Smith at New York University, and Larry Ebbers at Iowa State University show a commitment to linking research to service in the field. The contributions of Mike Miller at Alabama, and Betty Duvall at Oregon State bode well for the future of community college education.

We also see continuing contributions of the two largest programs in our field, as measured by the number of full-time faculty engaged in research related to community colleges. These programs are at North Carolina State University and the University of Texas at Austin.

North Carolina State University (NCSU) continues to provide leadership in many areas. George Vaughan has taken something good, as Terry Tollefson and Dale Campbell did before him, and improved upon it. The quality of Community College Review now rivals leading scholarly journals in the field of higher education. With the renewal of Kellogg Foundation sponsorship of Project ACCLAIM, NCSU builds upon the efforts of Edgar Boone to expand community-based programming in four states, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Virginia. The work of other NCSU colleagues regarding cultural leadership, diversity, and organizational dynamics continues to impact our field. We are all proud that NCSU makes George Baker available to serve as CUC's representative American Association of Community Colleges Board of Directors.

The University of Texas Community College Leadership Program also continues to impress. We see the contributions from our colleagues at Austin represented here today, with the receipt by Mark Milloran of our CUC Dissertation of the Year First Runner-Up Award. The Annual Meeting of the NISOD is now the third largest annual meetings of community college practitioners, after the annual meetings of AACC and the League for Innovation in the Community College. The latest work of John Rouche, honored by this organization as our CUC Senior Scholar, is another of his many contributions to the scholarship of community colleges. The Texas program employs two professors, Bill Moore and Don Phelps, with senior level management experience at urban community colleges. They possess a great deal of first-hand experience in issues related to increasing minority access to leadership positions at community colleges.

The situation is much different for the rest of us, however. I am concerned that our higher education doctoral programs are, in general, hurting. They are understaffed, and in many cases not well understood or appreciated within colleges of education that center around elementary and secondary teacher education. In my four years at Oklahoma State University between 1990 and

1994, the number of full-time faculty in higher education vacillated from 4 to 3 to 4 to 3 to 1 newly hired assistant professor in the year following my departure. Recent years have seen only four of the 100 doctoral programs in higher education in this country employ more than one full-time faculty member with an expertise in the community college (the University of Texas at Austin, North Carolina State University, Arizona State University, and the University of Alabama). Many programs with long reputations of leadership in the field of community college education such as the University of California at Los Angeles and the Universities of Michigan and Florida employ but one full-time community college specialist. Other large higher education programs that have enjoyed long reputations of service to the field, such as Michigan State University, do not employ a single full-time faculty member primarily engaged in research related to community colleges.

Most CUC members work in colleges of education where we usually are the only persons with interest in community colleges. Often, we are the only persons with expertise related to community colleges in our entire institutions. Nevertheless, numerically we represent the vast majority of members within the field of community college education and this organization.

Strategically, in my view, it makes little sense trying to develop greater internal validity within our colleges of education. In making this statement, let me emphatically emphasize that I am NOT suggesting that we shouldn't work closely to build ties of understanding regarding a more seamless system. We do, however, need to acknowledge that higher education programs tend to have greater validity within the central administrations of the universities in which they exist, and in the field, than they do within the colleges of education where they are housed.

How do we get our own institutions to place a greater value on research related to community colleges? Part of the problem does has to do with visibility. Many well-meaning people make assumptions about research related to community colleges based upon mistaken information. Patrick Terenzini in his 1995 Keynote Speech at the Association for the Study of Higher Education meeting noted a great need for additional research related to community colleges. This is part of the reason that spurs me to develop a classification of community colleges similar to that developed for four-year institutions by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Prior to the administration of David Pierce, if you called AACC and asked how many community college districts existed, they had no answer.

We need research that compares the 58 large multi-campus urban community college districts to each other, instead of pretending that differences do not exist. To compare those districts, which serve almost a quarter of the 5.6 million community college students in this country, to the 736 rural-based

community colleges makes no sense. The new AACC Research Agenda, as well as the new third edition of Arthur Cohen and Florence Brawer's The American Community College, both argue for the notion that differences between community colleges more relate to size as opposed to geography. I respectfully disagree, and argue that our failure to differentiate probably contributes to misunderstanding about what we do.

We need to be honest about the image problem and face facts: Many people even in the field of higher education *still* believe that research related to community colleges is somehow "less" valued than research in other areas of higher education. Part of this problem is self-inflicted. Community college educators are affected by the status and actions of the practitioners and institutions we study.

The low esteem by which the scholarly community holds AACC's Community College Journal is not insignificant. From the 1960s until just the past several years, institutions could purchase the cover page of an AACC Journal by paying a thousand dollars to the Association. Prior to the 1960s, Junior College Journal, AACC Journal's predecessor, was the home of lively debates about the historic and philosophic directions of community colleges. Beginning with the AACJC presidency of Edmund Glazer, it became essentially a trade journal, with no editorial board or blind review process. Fewer scholarly articles were accepted and the value publishing in it declined, and with it an important outlet for younger scholars engaged in gaining promotion and tenure. While we should applaud the work of AACC President David Pierce to upgrade the quality of all of AACC's publications, we need to push the association to make the journal the equal of other front-rank practitioner journals. Put simply, if the status of the AACC Journal rises to a level comparable to Academe, it will make it much easier for professors interested in the study of community colleges to help the association through the dissemination of research.

I am heartened by the new willingness of the association to engage its critics, as this augers well for the future. In 1976, a Steven Zwerling would not have been treated as respectfully as a Kevin Daughtery was last year. It is my hope that such critics, constructive and otherwise, would feel very welcome at CUC. Perhaps in the past they were not. Through this inclusion, we honor the debate that has characterized education in America since its colonial beginnings, and our independent roles as professors in the Academy.

As a professorate, we need to conceptualize better ways to address the issue of lower status appended to research related to community colleges. It appears that the problem is one part misunderstanding, the other part ignorance. Most of the problems internally within our colleges of education are due to a lack of understanding. Many of our colleagues simply don't know what we do. This is

related to the fact that our programs lie outside the core function and mission of what most colleges of education do, teacher education. Few deans of colleges of education attend meetings of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and fewer still attend ours.

Deliberate ignorance does exist, unfortunately, as recent events have shown. My first task upon returning home will be to finish the draft of The University of Toledo's response to the Ohio Board of Regents' review of doctoral programs in higher education. This document will in effect save our program by establishing a new higher education program with focus in academic affairs administration.

As happens all too often, the statewide review of higher education programs was merged with that of educational administration. Here ignorance *can be very deliberate*. While the knowledge base between educational administration programs and higher education programs is very different, we do share a common financial reality. As our friends from Kansas have noted, together we are the cash cow of the college of education cash cow for our institutions. The net effect of such merged reviews, whether out of misunderstanding, administrative "convenience," or ignorance, is often the same: The lowering of the value attached to research on community colleges.

Consider the names of the individuals selected by the Board of Regents to serve on their Education Review Panel Committee to evaluate the continuance of state subsidy for our doctoral programs in Ohio. How many of the following persons would you judge to have a significant background of research related to community colleges?

Jay Chronister, University of Virginia
Nathan Essex, University of Memphis
George Kuh, Indiana University Bloomington
Pedro Reyes, The University of Texas at Austin (Chair)
Gail Schneider, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Only two of these five have a well-established line of inquiry related to the field of higher education. None of the five possess an established line of inquiry related to community colleges.

Consider also the method of evaluation. The "guiding assumptions" to the Panel's review process were as follows:

> The Review Panel was asked to consider programs in relation to one another and within the context of other doctoral programs in the field across the country. Thus, in some instances there were substantial differences between the Panel's judgement of the quality

of a program and that of the eternal evaluators who were asked to evaluate each program on its own terms. For example, in applying a national frame of reference, the Panel expected professors to be engaged in a substantive line of scholarship, expected faculty contributing to Ph.D. programs to have published some of the research in premier journals such as **Educational Administration Quarterly, Journal of Educational Administration, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, and the American Education Research Journal, Journal of Higher Education, and Research in Higher Education.** The Panel also expected faculty to publish in first quality practitioner journals such as **Educational Leadership, Phi Delta Kappan, School Administrator,** and **Academe**, among others. It was also expected that faculty publish in second tier journals such as **Planning and Changing, Journal of School Leadership, The High School Journal, The Elementary School Journal, Educational Research Journal, and the Community College Review**, among others.[2] (emphasis original).

Our field spans teaching in higher education and practicing administrators. Doctoral degrees in higher education often serve as finishing degrees in areas as diverse as nursing education to recreation and communications. Even at our largest research universities, there are *many* fields for which terminal degrees at the doctoral level do not exist. We know that faculty at colleges, universities, and community colleges use our doctoral programs as finishing degrees for careers in college teaching. Their alternative is to spend three or four years in residential full-time study to obtain a discipline-based Ph.D. degree. This is simply not a viable or appropriate option for working practitioners in many fields, including specifically those teaching in the hard sciences.

How do we get our colleges of education to show greater respect for research related to community colleges? We all know of persons in the junior ranks, who while interested in research related to community colleges, choose to present before Division J of the American Educational Research Association over the Council of Universities and Colleges and AACC. They are reacting to a perception held by others that community college related research is somehow "second class," and a belief that at promotion and tenure time, cross-college of education personnel committees know AERA and do not know CUC or respect AACC. This in part explains the competition for highly sought foundation grants. Grants from the two foundations with the longest histories of involvement with community

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[2] Walters, Garrison A. Ohio Board of Regents, *Final Report: Education Review Panel*, December, 7, 1995, p. 1.

colleges carry great face validity. Our colleagues on promotion and tenure committees within many of our colleges of education, and the university-wide promotion and tenure committees may not understand what we do, but they have heard of the Ford and Kellogg Foundations. These grants serve to validate our connections between scholarly research to practice in a way that involvement with AACC does not. In considering the improvement and expansion of connections, we also need to concern ourselves with raising the visibility of what we do within our own colleges of education.

Service is the Key

It is interesting that in our wild and strange set up, there is often no connection between need and service. This is not necessarily bad, in that the freedom to pursue lines of inquiry wherever they might lead is a fundamental tenant of the academic enterprise. That so many of us are self-starters is an indication of the extent to which we buy into this belief. The key to improve status in our field, in my view, is to place service at the top of the triad of teaching, research, and service. So how do we best accomplish this?

Service is the key. I would like now to offer some ideas as to how we can commit ourselves to increased service opportunities and initiatives. It is my view that in colleges of education, service is at the pinnacle of the triad, with teaching and research as vehicles to accomplish that service. This is because education is an applied field. Great teaching at its best is an art form, and research useful only if it informs what we know about the how institutions work (or fail to) and is conveyed to improve practice. At our base, we are part of an applied field, and probably always will be.

It is useful in thinking about service to consider the place of community college education within higher education as a field of study. From the time of G. Stanley Hall and the development of the first program of study in higher education at Clark College in 1925 through today, the only function unique to higher education doctoral programs is the study of community colleges. Student affairs in many colleges of education is housed as a specialization within secondary education counseling and educational psychology, and higher education finance and business management might be housed in the business college or in a public affairs program. Community college education is the only area of study unique to higher education doctoral programs. Thus, as our health goes, so goes to a very large extent the health of the field we are part and parcel of. This is why the work of CUC, through its Graduate Student Seminar and annual meetings is so vital, as Darrell Clowes reminds us, in developing the pipeline and socializing the next generation of scholars.

Service Opportunities for Larger Programs

In thinking about service opportunities, let us first turn to the larger programs, such as North Carolina State University, the University of Texas at Austin, and other programs with more than 1.0 full-time equivalent faculty engaged in research related to community colleges. What service activities might these larger programs do to enhance our field?

I challenge the largest programs to hire and tenure at least one professor for whom one-half of their time would be devoted to *service*. Not service strictly defined in terms of assisting community colleges in a single state such as Arizona, North Carolina or Texas, but rather *service to the field of community college and higher education*. What kinds of projects might such an individual be engaged in?

First, such a person might develop and disseminate a selected bibliography on higher education that specifically includes focus on recently completed doctoral dissertations related to community colleges. Increasingly, with the application of a hard science model of university ownership of intellectual property toward the social sciences, we are seeing Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI) becoming less comprehensive than before. Institutions like Harvard have never anticipated in DAI. Isn't it interesting that in an age of Internet and increased electronic communications, we might be on the verge of a precipitous decline in the value of data archives such as DAI? Here is an opportunity for important service to our field. The development of a selected bibliography on higher education, with focus on community colleges, would be an important contribution to the teaching in the field. It would be purchased and valued by our graduate students, faculty colleagues, and interested institutional research and practitioner-scholars in the field like Max Reichard at Delgado Community College or Scot Spicer at Glendale Community College.

Second, such a person might collect and disseminate information related to the teaching of community college education. Each of us has developed a "best practice," a teaching technique that has really "worked" for us. Debra Bragg and Jim Palmer discussed how they approached their team-taught course as part of yesterday's CUC sessions. We need more of presentations of this variety. Let us share best practices in the preparation of community college leaders across all of our institutions in future years.

Third, related to the second point, such a person might work to develop a better data base on our own field. The scholarly contributions of Marybelle Keim in her follow up studies of higher education/community college educators provide direction in this regard. Much more is needed. Do a smaller percentage of

community college administrators today possess degrees in community college, adult, or higher education today than 25 years ago? Is the growth simply due to the growth in the number of institutions and administrators? This is an area of inquiry that our larger programs are particularly well-positioned to develop.

A fourth way by which the larger programs in our field might serve the smaller ones would be to create expanded opportunities for dialog. I am thinking along the lines of what George Counts established years ago with the Cleveland Council. Envisioned are regional meetings within reasonable driving range for an afternoon, evening, and half-day following, with little in the way of an agenda and an awful lot in the way of open-mike time. There would be few rules, such as not speaking while others are talking, precisely as the Renaissance Weekend functions in which President Clinton participates each New Year's weekend at Hilton Head. Such regional programs would serve to tie our graduates to the study of higher education after they leave us. It simply makes more sense, given the mobility of our graduates, to tie them to the region they happen to live in, as opposed solely to the institution they happened to have graduated from. A good journal editor might make the typed proceedings of such regional meetings ten times more interesting than many journals are today, as Counts did decades ago.

Such regional conferences should extend invitations to community college, private liberal arts college, and state college administrators to participate. The only way I see out of the funding conundrum American higher education now finds itself in is to develop strategies to make the pie bigger. We should end our participation in the mean-spirited game of divide and conquer, playing the privates against the publics at the state and federal levels, while corrections and Medicaid walk off with the lion's share of new monies. This means that we have to reestablish trust along the lines of what existed in the mid-1960s. There is a supertanker to be turned around, and accomplishing this task will take extended dialog. The larger programs have a significant role to play by providing forums that promote such needed dialog, the necessary precursor to developing long-term trust. By my way of thinking, there is simply no other alternative, lest we be satisfied with a long-term reduction in funding at the federal and state levels.

Thus, the objective would be simply the promotion of interaction. Let's see if we can take vehicles that already exist, like the Southeastern Association for Community College Research, NISOD, and the new conference on leadership that George Baker and his colleagues at North Carolina State University have recently established, and use them as vehicles to accomplish this.

All four of the suggestions aimed at our larger programs have as their purpose to provide greater opportunities and avenues for service. Through service, we increase the visibility of what we do, and in doing so enhance the value of doctoral programs in higher education and community college education.

Service Opportunities for Smaller Programs

Participation in organizations like the Council of Universities and Colleges for persons working in smaller programs is vital to providing avenues and opportunities for service. My sincere hope that the end of this academic year will see the CUC Home Page come on-line. Housed at UCLA, this will be another of the many contributions of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges to research in our field. With the on-line capacity, students of Susan Twombly's in Kansas interested in a dissertation topic related to, say, transfer, would be able to review a list of community college experts, and easily find the names of five or seven persons to serve on panels of experts to review dissertation instruments. Each CUC member would be listed, with information tied to ERIC descriptors and additional information below. That student in Kansas could easily identify the Laura Rendons and Jim Palmers of the world. This is but one opportunity for service.

It is my hope that subsequent years will see CUC used to promote service to our field. We should not only use CUC as a vehicle to discuss research related to community colleges, we can also use it as a place to share ideas regarding best practices to strengthen our programs. Some may disagree with aspects of the philosophical approach to the way the higher education program is organized at the University of Texas at Austin, but John Rouche can teach *all* of us lessons regarding how to build external support for a higher education program. There is good reason why John has so many students at AACC meetings each year. Most of us haven't figured out how to find the money, and we need to share this kind of information if we are to develop the next generation of community college scholars. Let us learn from one another about how to expand opportunities for graduate students to attend meetings like ours.

Service and the Future of Community College Education

In conclusion, the future of community college education is brighter now that it has been in my eleven years of involvement with this organization. The direction and contributions of the Council of Universities and Colleges in recent years is most heartening. In two interrelated areas, inclusiveness and contributions to the socialization and development of new scholars, CUC is moving forward and with it, our field.

Our meetings the past two years have seen a blurring of the distinction between the regular CUC Program, which in the past was typically open only to professors and their recent doctoral graduates, and the Graduate Student Seminar. Today, interested practitioners, including institutional researchers find

a welcome home here. With the election of Dan Phelan today as President-Elect and 1997 CUC Program Chair, we have the first person ever elected to this position holding a staff position at a community college.

The Graduate Student Seminar celebrates its fifth birthday this year, and its progress amazes me. The Seminar has more than tripled in size since the first meeting in Phoenix five years ago. Both of our Dissertation of the Year Award recipients, Romero Jalano from Arizona State University, and Mark Milliron from the University of Texas-Austin, were past participants in CUC Graduate Student Seminars. We now see several new professors emerging in our field who had participated in the seminar while in their graduate programs. This important work needs to continue. As we adopt an inclusive organizational model to expand opportunities for graduate and professional participation along the lines of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), let us not forget the central role the we play--the central role we *must* play--to advance this profession.

The extant diversity in our field is reflected in other important ways. The Distinguished Service Award winners for the past two years included persons of color and persons from beyond the boarders of the United States. This year's winners of our Dissertation of the Year award also reflect that diversity. We are more connected to the ASHE and other organizations related to the study of higher education than ever before. The Program Chair for the 1996 ASHE meeting, Barbara Townsend, is a board member of our organization, and the good old boy stigma related to community college related research that a number of us felt as recently as five years ago no longer exists. Much of the leadership for the recently formed Council for the Advancement of Programs in the Study of Higher Education within ASHE came from CUC members. We are better connected within the field of higher education, and CUC as an organization is more inclusive than just five years ago. As we move forward, we need to remember that efforts like CAPSHE to bolster higher education as a field of study deserve our whole-hearted support. What we do is central to the health of the doctoral programs in higher education in this country. We need to expand the diversity of voices in our field in future years, building upon momentum already established, remembering that service is the key.

Service was a key factor that motivated Alexander Astin to begin his longitudinal data base. Isn't it interesting that the single most important longitudinal data base in the field of higher education was initiated to provide service to the field, not as research for the sake of research? Similarly, service was the foundation of the quiet efforts of Darrell Clowes and others to improve AACC's convention by increasing our involvement in it. Of the 129 AACC forum presentations at this 1996 Convention, 27 involved members of our Council, about a fifth of all sessions. It is difficult to underestimate the importance of this service contribution to David Pierce and its effect in improving the intellectual

experience at the AACC Convention. This is important service to the field. Service also lies at the base of the approach of Laura Rendon and Richard Hope in their recent book, Educating a New Majority. In spanning the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary systems, they have taken a service perspective, while adding value to community college related research. Engaging our faculty colleagues in elementary and secondary education is one way to internally raise the status of what we do within colleges of education centered in teacher education. Who better to do that than the professors who possess the best understanding of the systems and institutions that are in the middle, buffeted alike by both the four-year systems above and the secondary systems below?

Service therefore is key. For those involved in community college, adult, and higher education programs, be they large or small, the Council of Universities and Colleges offers many potential vehicles for service to the field of community college education. I challenge all of you to get involved and make a difference, remembering that service is the key.